

/26 cont./

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Not rarely the arrangement of the teeth is irregular. With relative frequency one notes the absence of the upper incisors, particularly in the villages in which it is customary to suck a great deal of sugar cane. The development of caries is attributed to the use of salt in the diet, at least among the Nandéva; there are those who also give as the cause the consumption of half-raw or merely smoked meat. The fact is, however, that one meets many adults with very well preserved teeth, without a flaw or the slightest indication of caries. Among the Kayová, in the individuals lacking the upper incisors, the crown of the lower ones has a length one and a half times that of the other teeth. Some Mbã of the village of Palmeirinha showed a slight alveolar prognathism, accompanied by /27/ histodontia. With respect to the latter peculiarity, the Indians questioned said that it was not a matter of mutilation, but a congenital formation.

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The occurrence of the plica palpebralis is not generalized in any of the three subgroups. It is a strange fact, because my observations among mestizo children lead me to acknowledge the genetic dominance of this characteristic among the Guaraní. In numerous cases the fold is not enough to cover the caruncula.

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There are few physical mutilations in use among the Guaraní. The most important one is the piercing of the lower lip, to which boys are subjected before puberty. As acculturation progresses, the use of the tembetá or lip plug is abandoned, as well as the piercing of the lip. The Nandéva must have abandoned it long ago; I have not seen any individual with a pierced lip among them. But in the mythology of this group, Tupã, the god of thunder, crosses the sky with a glittering tembetá, represented by lightning, which seems to indicate that in ancient times the Nandéva, too, were familiar with this ornament. For their part, some of the present-day Mbã do not have the pierced lip, and those who display it do not customarily use the tembetá; I have seen Mbã boys with a pierced lip only in a group from Itariri (Paulista coast) who had come from Rio Grande do Sul in 1946 under the chieftaincy of the Randerú Miguel. Those that most cling to the custom are the Kayová, although even among them,

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142 and owing to the fact that the women have to carry on their
182 backs all the products of the plantings, while the men who work
[142] in the yerbales /stands of yerba maté/ of Mato Grosso must carry
[482] burdens of hundreds of kilos (the cause, incidentally, of frequent
[64] hernias or "ruptures"). The development of the musculature of
[535] the legs is also due in part to the almost daily dances in which
all the members of the tribe participate.

163 The birth rate is quite high in all the Guaraní groups. In
general a woman has ten to twelve children in the course of her
life, but little more than half of them reach adulthood. There
[65] are villages in which child mortality is as high as sixty per cent.
Yet I also know an old Nandéva woman who had ten children,
eight or nine of whom reached adulthood; this, however, is an
exceptional case.

842 The Guaraní woman wants to have many children. For the
[824] purpose of facilitating conception, the Kayová women drink the
tea of a plant called memby djá ú djá; they say that it is some-
times enough for a woman to pass near this plant to become preg-
nant. There is another plant that is used to promote the concep-
tion of male children. At least the Kayová and the Nandéva pre-
fer male offspring.

842 Among the Kayová and Mbhá there is said to be infanticide
845 of twins, and the strangulation of crippled children is also said to
occur. But, with respect to the Nandéva, I have noticed, for
instance, a couple with twin daughters, both alive and one of
them crippled; at Araribá I knew a Nandéva family with twin
children of the male sex. The different attitude toward twins
is based, perhaps, on the great diversity of mythical representa-

732 tions in this respect. In the Kayová villages and among the
[828] Nandéva of Jacaré I found dull and senseless individuals, who,
incidentally, were treated with special affection. The father
[842] (Kayová) presented one of them to me as Tüpá rymbá, /29/
"created by God," that is, conceived without there having been
any sexual relations between the couple, and sent as a substitute
for an earlier child that had died.